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AUTHOR Iliescu, Sanda M.  
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INSTITUTION Washington Univ., Seattle.  
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## ABSTRACT

Grammatical transfer is used to render the values and meanings of the structures in Romanian pronouns into English. This device can be used in explaining the exact nuances of Romanian pronouns to speakers of English. In translating from English to Romanian, a special problem is presented by the pronoun "you," which in Romanian can take one of many forms. In Romanian there are distinct forms of the second persons pronoun used in parallel with forms of the pronoun of reverence, which permits a wide gradation in the communication of the message. Therefore, when translating from English, a wider context is necessary; this enables the translator to establish the nature of the relations between the addressor and the addressee. In addition, the peculiarities of usage of the personal pronouns must be kept in mind. For instance, in translating from English into Romanian, one must not render all the personal pronouns; this is unnecessary and would make for clumsy translations, since in Romanian the mere use of the personal pronoun is a means of accentuation. (AM)

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"Three Ways to say 'You', Among Other Pronouns"

by

Sanda M. Iliescu

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### The Grammatical Transfer.

The personal pronouns in English and Romanian coincide only partially formally or contextually. One can notice a much greater variety of pronominal forms in Romanian, as compared to the seven-system element in English. A comparison makes it necessary to discuss the differences in form caused by the existence of specific dimensions in the pronominal systems of the two languages, namely: in Romanian there is a category of the pronoun of politeness, with a whole range of stylistic nuances related to the speaker's attitude towards the second person whom he is addressing or the third person who is talked about. In English, this pronominal category is altogether missing, the nuances of reverence being rendered by other means, related or not to grammar, as will be seen later. Therefore, a comparison has to be established between the rich gradation of Romanian forms and the far less numerous forms in English.

The second problem refers to gender: the English pronoun it for the neuter used for objects, animals, etc. does not have a corresponding form in Romanian, where the neuter is expressed in the singular by using the masculine and in the plural by using the feminine.

The two diagrams given below present the personal pronoun in English and the personal pronoun + the pronoun of politeness in Romanian.

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Diagram no. 1.

| Singular | Plural |
|----------|--------|
| I        | we     |
| you      |        |
| he       | they   |
| she      |        |
| it       |        |

Diagram no. 2.

| Singular              | Plural          |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| eu                    | noi             |
| tu                    | voi             |
| * dumneata            | * dumneavoastră |
| el, dînsul            | ei, dînsii      |
| * dumneata, dumnealui | * dumnealor     |
| ea, dînsa             | ele, dînsele    |
| * dumneasa, dumneaei  | * dumnealor     |

\* Pronouns of politeness.

We shall call the two languages, preserving the terminology used by J. C. Catford in A Linguistic Theory of Translation, Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL). We shall try to obtain a grammatical transfer, representing the SL grammatical elements (in our case, Romanian) by TL grammatical elements (English) which will acquire the specific characteristics of the SL elements.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, there are two new dimensions which the two pronominal systems SL and TL do not have in common, namely: reverence, which exists only in SL, and the neuter, which has a special form in TL alone. That is why the following mnemonic symbols were resorted to: for the first dimension -h (slightly honorific), -hh (honorific) and -hhh (most honorific), which will mark the degrees of reverence in Romanian; for

1. See J. C. Catford, A Linguistic Theory of Translation, London, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 44.

the second dimension, the symbol -t was introduced (from "things", avoiding o from "objects", not to create a possible confusion with object-complement).

Mention must be made of the fact that the pronoun dînsul, which ranks among the personal pronouns and not among the pronouns of politeness, is rather debatable from the point of view of its implications connected with reverence: it can be considered simply another form for el, it can be considered the equivalent of dumnealui, or it can finally be considered politer than the form el, forming the gradation: el-dînsul-dumnealui.<sup>1</sup> This final treatment has been adopted in the present paper, marking it with h (slightly honorific) in diagram no. 3.

There exists a third dimension that could have been taken into consideration, namely that of the so-called inclusive plurals, which "include the person of the speaker, respectively the person to whom the speaker addresses himself, in a group with other persons,"<sup>2</sup> the latter being in Romanian the pronouns noi and voi, in English we and you (with reference to the plural) respectively. As in this case there is an identity between the two languages, it has not been considered necessary to introduce any special notations.

The diagram given below presents the English pronouns enriched with the specific elements of the Romanian pronouns; the English pronouns,

1. See Gramatica Limbii Române, Editura Academiei RSR, Bucharest, 1966.

2. See Gramatica Limbii Române, Editura Academiei RSR, Bucharest, 1966, p. 136.

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thus modified, have now acquired the same meaning as the pronouns in Romanian.

Diagram no. 3.

| <u>Singular</u>                       | <u>Plural</u>                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I                                     | we                                    |
| you <sup>h</sup>                      | you <sup>hhh</sup>                    |
| he, he <sup>h</sup> , he <sup>h</sup> | they <sup>h</sup> , they <sup>h</sup> |
| she, she <sup>h</sup>                 | they <sup>hhh</sup>                   |
| she <sup>hh</sup>                     |                                       |

By means of this grammatical transfer, the grammatical elements of the Target Language acquire the values and the meanings of the structures in SL. This device can be resorted to in order to explain the exact nuances of the Romanian pronouns to speakers of English.

The Pronoun "You".

"Any comparison of two languages implies their mutual translatability," Roman Jakobson says in his study On Linguistic Aspects of Translation.<sup>1</sup> This problem of translatability, of the comparison between the elements of two languages, leads us to the problem of bilingual synonymy, of finding accurate equivalents in one language for the terms of another one. From the point of view of denotation, one can find almost perfect equivalents, but on the whole connotation differs from one language to the other. The translation of a word makes it necessary to understand it from a linguistic, as well as a non-linguistic

1. On Translation, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, p. 234.

point of view. It is the degree of this understanding that will ultimately result in finding an accurate equivalent.

Within the framework of a comparison between the personal pronouns in Romanian and English, a most interesting problem is that of the second person pronoun - the pronoun of address.

Any process of communication involves the existence of the couple emitter-receiver (Roman Jakobson in Linguistics and Poetics calls it addresser-addressee) with a message circulating between them. In the case of the pronoun for the second person, the emitter will address the receiver through the intermediate of this pronoun; this represents only a part of the complex code of verbal attitudes directed towards the "addressee".<sup>1</sup> Between the addressers and the addressees, certain relations are established, which can be of two natures: from a superior to an inferior (or vice versa) or between equals. The relations superior  $\leftrightarrow$  inferior are determined by certain social coordinates: by position within the family, by age, sex, wealth, etc. The relations of equality are generated by the membership in the same organization, school, university, family, etc.

In Romanian, as well as in other Romance languages, there are distinct forms of the personal pronouns of the second person (tu and voi), used in parallel with the forms of the pronoun of reverence (dumneata, dvs.) occasioning a wide gradation in the communication of the message. This rich pronominal form system has the equivalent you in English, a

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1. See Style in Language, edited by Th. Sebeok, Mass. Institute of Technology, 1960, p. 278.

fact which entails serious problems connected with finding accurate corresponding forms when translating from English into Romanian.

In English a wider context is necessary in order to make the translation possible. The context enables us to establish the nature of the relations between the addresser and the addressee. If this context is very limited, the translation remains impossible. Thus, in I want to talk to you, you can mean tu, dumneata or dumneavoastră, as the context is not rich enough for a correct synonymic choice.

The translation becomes possible when there appears a lexical element in the context, in general of a nominal nature. Here are a few cases, without attempting at giving an exhaustive list of possibilities.

I. The nominal element is a proper name:

- 1) a family name, accompanied by Mr. or Mrs.:

Are you down here for long, Mr. Welch?<sup>1</sup>

(Ați venit pentru mai mult timp, domnule Welch?)

The Romanian pronoun corresponding to you is dvs. (included in the person of the verb) followed by verbs in the second person plural. The Romanian pronoun can also possibly be dumneata (included in the person of the verb) + the verb in the second person singular.

- 2) the family name, unaccompanied by Mr. or Mrs.:

Look here, Dickinson, or whatever your name is, perhaps you think you're being funny...<sup>2</sup>

(Ia ascultă, Dickinson sau cum te cheamă, poate-ți închi-pui că ai haz).

1. Kingsley Amis, Lucky Jim, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 40.

2. idem. p. 42.

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The Romanian pronoun corresponding to you is in this case dumneata or tu (in the translation included in the person of the verb) followed by a verb in the second person singular.

3) the given name:

Oh, James, you're incorrigible.<sup>1</sup>

(Vai, James, ești incorigibil).

The corresponding Romanian pronoun is tu or dumneata (included in the person of the verb) followed by a verb in the second person singular. The pronoun you accompanied by these nominal elements will be translated by dumneavoastră accompanied by a verb in the second person plural.

II. The nominal element is a title, generally denoting the function:

1) accompanied by Mr., for important functions such as: Minister, President, Vice President, Secretary, Attorney General, etc.:

Will you read the letters now, Mr. Minister?

(Doriți să citiți scrisorile acum, domnule ministru?)

The pronoun you placed near a nominal element of this type will be translated in general by dvs. followed by a verb in the third person plural. In the great majority of instances, in such a case the message is addressed to a superior. Even when the receiver is the equal or the inferior of the emitter, the pronoun is still Dvs. (seldom dta used by a superior) owing to the nature of the rank.

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1. Kingsley Amis, Lucky Jim, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 43.

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2) functions such as Professor, Doctor, Justice, Judge, Captain, Lieutenant, Officer, etc., are not accompanied by Mr. They are often followed by the proper name.

"Thought you'd gone without me, Professor..."<sup>1</sup>

(Credeam că ați plecat fără mine, domnule profesor).

The pronoun you accompanied by such a nominal element is translated by Dvs. or da, in keeping with the relations between the emitter and the receiver. In general, in Romanian, unlike English, the function is accompanied by domnule, a fact which has to be emphasized to students of Romanian, because it leads to frequent mistakes.

3) with nominal elements denoting such functions as driver, operator, waiter, etc., you is translated by dumneata or tu, with the verb in the second person singular, rarely by dvs.

And that's for you, boy.<sup>2</sup> (a messenger)

(Asta e pentru dumneata, băiete.)

III. The nominal element is Sir, Madam. In English, these are used when an inferior addresses his superior and consequently the translation of the pronoun you will be dvs.

Smith: Well, Sir, d'you remember that cork you drew?<sup>3</sup>

(Domnule/consule/, vă amintiți de dopul pe care l-ați scos?)

In the above-mentioned cases, the receiver is one person. In English owing to the use of the same pronominal form for the second person

1. Kingsley Amis, Lucky Jim, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 11.

2. W. Szrojan, The Human Comedy, Schorx Publishers Berne, 1944, p. 197.

3. S. Maugham, Smith, Tauchnitz, Leipzig 34, p. 226.

singular and plural, it is sometimes necessary to mark the use of you when related to the plural by other elements. Thus one can use pronominal elements such as both of you, all of you which carry a plural meaning and should be translated by voi (included in the person of the verb) or by dumneavoastră followed by a verb in the second person plural. One can equally use numerals such as you two, etc., or nominal elements in the plural: ladies and gentlemen or other forms of plural address.

In the translation of the English pronoun you one must bear in mind the peculiarities of usage of the personal pronoun in the language in which one is translating. This is in close connection with the important problem of connotation and denotation. Connotation is the same in both languages, while denotation differs. In the case of the personal pronoun, one notices that, in Italian for instance, tu is used more frequently than in other languages, such as French or German for instance,<sup>1</sup> therefore a translation from English into Italian is bound to observe this aspect.

In the case of Romanian, besides the range of possibilities or translation supplied by the forms tu, dta, dvs., there exists a great many other forms of the pronoun of reverence such as mata, matale, mătăluț, mătălică, tălică. These forms are regional and have not been discussed for this reason, just as the English pronoun thou for the singular has not been dealt with in particular, as today it occurs only dialectally.

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1. See R. Brown & A. Gilman, The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity in Style in Language, ed. Sebeok, 1960.

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The fluctuations in the use of the pronoun by the same emitter towards the same receiver generally reflect the changes in the emitter's state of mind. Such changes are more noticeable in Romanian owing to the existence of different pronominal forms for the second person. A person who has consistently addressed his interlocutor with dvs. will shift to da, or even tu, under the influence of emotion, excitement, aggravation, etc. A case in point is poet T. Arghezi's line: "Iartă-mă că-ți spun și tu și dumneata."

In English, the changes in state of mind can be rendered by the appearance of emotional elements. In the example quoted above: "Look here, Dickinson, or whatever your name is, perhaps you think you're being funny..." obviously one cannot translate you by dvs., owing to the presence of "whatever your name is" which implies a disrespectful way of addressing somebody.

#### The Personal Pronoun in Translations.

Owing to the analytical character of English, the presence of the subject is in general compulsory. It cannot be included in the person of the verb as in Romanian, where the verb is richly inflected. In the translations from English into Romanian, one must not render all the personal pronouns, as this is unnecessary for clarity and would lead to clumsy translations.

In the following fragment from Three Men in a Boat accompanied by the Romanian translation of L. Levițchi, one can notice the much greater number of personal pronouns used in English as compared to Romanian:

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"I will not take up your time, dear boy, with telling you what is the matter with me. Life is brief and you might pass away before I had finished. But I will tell you what is not the matter with me. I have not got housemaid's knee. Why I have not got housemaid's knee, I cannot tell you; but the fact remains that I have not got it. Everything else, however, I have got."

"N-am să te fac să-ți pierzi timpul, dragul meu, înșirindu-ți cîte am. Viata e scurtă și s-ar putea să-ti sfîrșești zilele înainte ca eu să fi isprăvit. Să-ți spun mai bine ce nu am. Nu am artrită. De ce nu am artrita n-as putea să-ți explic, fapt este că n-o am. Am însă toate celelalte boli."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes the use of the pronoun in Romanian is necessary for the sake of clarity. In the paragraph quoted above, the sentence "Life is brief and you might pass away before I had finished" is rendered into Romanian by "Viața e scurtă și s-ar putea să-ți sfîrșești zilele înainte ca eu să fi isprăvit" where eu is indispensable, because by omitting it (înainte să fi isprăvit) the pronoun tu is implied (s-ar putea să-ți sfîrșești zilele înainte ca tu să fi isprăvit).

In Romanian, the personal pronoun discharging the function of a subject must be used when the emphasis falls on the person and when a person is set in opposition to another one.<sup>3</sup>

a) the emphasis falls on the person:

"Then he told us anecdotes of how he had gone across the Channel when it was so rough that the passengers had to be tied into their berths, and he and the captain were the only two

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1. Jerome K. Jerome, Three Men in a Boat, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 12.
  2. Jerome K. Jerome, Trei într-o barcă, Ed. Tineretului, 1967, p.
  3. Vezi Gramatica limbii române, Ed. Academiei R.S.R., Bucharest, 1966, vol. I, p. 150.

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living souls on board who were not ill. Sometimes it was he and the second mate who were not ill; but it was generally he and one other man. If not he and another man, than it was he by himself.<sup>1</sup>

"Se apucă după aceea să ne spună baliverne despre o traversar a Canalului Mîneei pe o vreme atît de rea, încît toţi pasagerii au trebuit să fie legaţi de paturi, singurii muritori de pe bord cărora nu le era rău fiind el şi căpitanul vasului. Alteori scăpau teferi numai el şi secundul; într-un cuvînt, de obicei el şi încă cineva.<sup>2</sup> Şi dacă nu el şi încă cineva, atunci numai Harris singur."<sup>2</sup>

Both languages use the repetition of the pronouns he - el.

a) a person is set in opposition to another one:

"It's all very well for you, fellows," he says; "you like it but I don't."<sup>3</sup>

"Vouă vă convine - părea el să spună. Vouă vă place, dar mie, nu!"<sup>4</sup>

In Romanian, the mere use of the personal pronoun represents a means of accentuation. In English, this is achieved in written form by graphic devices, such as in the example given above, where I is rendered in italics, and in speech by intonation.

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1. Jerome K. Jerome, Three Men in a Boat, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 18.
  2. Jerome K. Jerome, Trei într-o barcă, Ed. Tineretului, 1967, p. 25-26.
  3. Jerome K. Jerome, Three Men in a Boat, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 20.
  4. Jerome K. Jerome, Trei într-o barcă, Ed. Tineretului, 1967, p. 29.

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